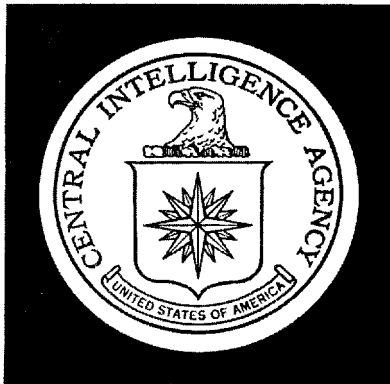


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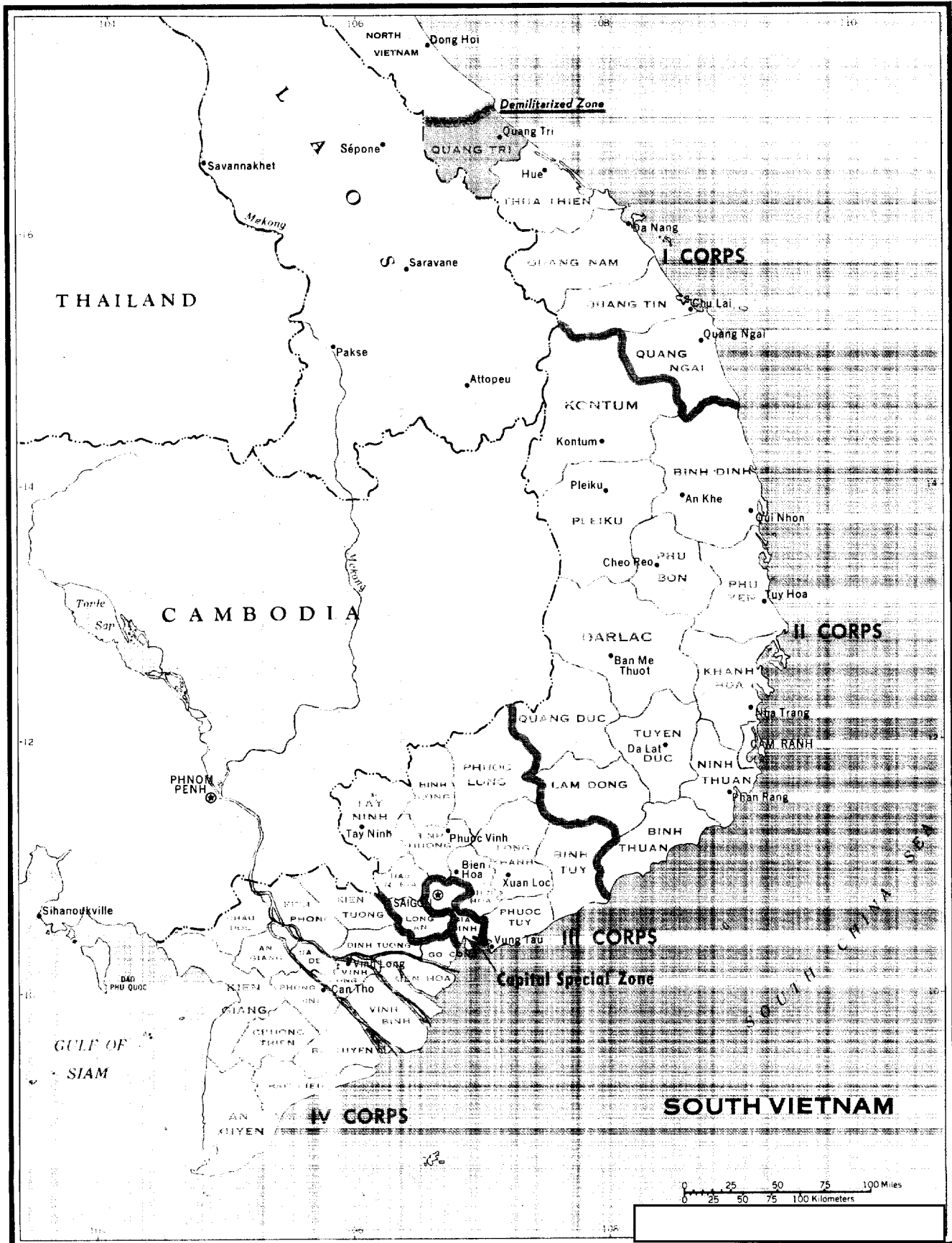
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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

Military Developments in South Vietnam: Encounters between US and Communist forces in South Vietnam's I Corps area continue at a relatively high rate. US Marines near the demilitarized zone have reported several sharp clashes in their search for enemy troops, headquarters, and supply areas in northern Quang Tri Province. South Vietnamese Army troops also reported several engagements on 23-24 March in the northern provinces. (Map)

There were no significant political developments in the past 24 hours.

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Communist China: Peking is pressing ahead with efforts to rebuild battered municipal and provincial administrations.

Twice this week--on 19 and 22 March--Premier Chou En-lai was the main speaker at congresses of mass organizations. On both occasions one of his key themes was the need for early formation of a Revolutionary Committee to govern the city of Peking. At these meetings delegates were nominated to serve on the committee.

A possible model for provincial Revolutionary Committees has already been set up in the north-central province of Shansi, where a congress of delegates from various revolutionary groups met from 12 to 18 March. The Shansi committee described itself as "provisional," and its regulations were termed "tentative," suggesting that changes may still be made.

The Shansi Revolutionary Committee appears to have streamlined some of the government apparatus and possibly is taking over some of the functions of the provincial party organization. The committee's charter describes its political department as "the leading organ of the party's political work." The head of the committee also has been named chief of the provincial party apparatus.

A senior army political commissar appears to be the real power. He chaired the Shansi congress and also was elected ranking vice chairman of the Revolutionary Committee. A Liberation Army Journal editorial on 23 March implied the military will take a leading role in organizing other provincial governments.

(continued)

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Despite these efforts to restore order, there are still signs of discord within the leadership. Chou En-lai was criticized by name in wall posters [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The criticism, however, was cautious and was posted by a relatively insignificant revolutionary group. Chou was criticized by posters briefly in January and may have been the indirect target of recent attacks on some of his associates. [REDACTED]

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USSR-US: Reversing its position, Moscow now insists that a nonproliferation treaty must contain verification provisions.

On 23 March Foreign Minister Gromyko told Ambassador Thompson that while the Soviets had not initially viewed the verification provisions as having high priority, they now strongly support the US suggestion that they be included in the treaty. He said the USSR will insist that Article III of the draft treaty be retained.

On the same day, Roshchin, the Soviet delegate to the Geneva disarmament conference, took a similar position in talking to Ambassador Foster. However, he added that the treaty might simply state that safeguards relating to peaceful nuclear activities of states not having nuclear weapons could come under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). One of Roshchin's deputies said that the important point was that the safeguards clause should take effect immediately.

The shift in Moscow's position will greatly complicate US efforts to find a formula generally acceptable in Western Europe. EURATOM countries have lately shown some interest in the possibility that arrangements might be worked out for the IAEA to verify the existing EURATOM safeguards system during a transition period. It appears that this compromise would not now be acceptable to Moscow.

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French Somaliland: Paris is having doubts about its ability to implement the new statute resulting from the recent referendum.

Foreign Minister Couve de Murville fears that the statute, which involves changes in the administration of the territory, will prove unworkable. French efforts to contain Somali rioting in Djibouti by deporting many Somalis who crossed into the territory in recent years--a short-term palliative at best--have encountered Mogadiscio's refusal to accept them.

If France concludes it cannot administer the territory in the face of internal disturbances and charges of "colonial oppression," Paris may propose new steps toward independence. According to a high Quai official, the government does not intend to tie the territory indefinitely to France.

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Zambia - Communist China: Peking is seeking to expand its limited influence in Zambia by providing financial assistance.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] the Chinese had offered Zambia a \$16.8-million interest-free loan for internal development. Kaunda has stated publicly that the Zambian Government is studying a Chinese aid offer.

The Chinese apparently are trying to exploit Zambia's current dissatisfaction over Western policy toward Rhodesia and the scale of Western economic assistance.

Although Zambia is wary of Chinese political motives, it might accept the offer as part of its effort to find financing for programs related to the Rhodesian question.

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Colombia-Cuba: Recently increased guerrilla activity is leading President Lleras to support Venezuelan diplomatic moves against Castro.

Lleras hopes to work out a joint strategy with Venezuela to blame Cuba for guerrilla outbreaks in the two countries. The guerrillas ambushed an army patrol on 22 March, the fourth significant security incident within a month.

Two attacks were apparently carried out by the pro-Castro Army of National Liberation (ELN), and two are thought to be the work of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which has connections with the Communist Party of Colombia (PCC). The circumstances of the attacks suggest that there may have been some coordination between certain elements of the ELN and the FARC.

Colombia has long been near the top of Fidel Castro's list of countries marked for subversion, and some Cuban support for the guerrillas reportedly has been supplied.

[redacted] the PCC, whose top leaders play down guerrilla warfare, is prepared to "break relations" with Cuba because of Castro's interference in Colombia.

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Differences have reportedly cropped up within the PCC over the party's policy on insurgency. With the conservative older leaders now in prison, the second-echelon leaders may try to encourage a harder line.

[redacted]

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Sierra Leone: Political tension has eased in the wake of the take-over by field-grade army officers on 23 March. The junta, strengthened by the adherence of the two top police officials, includes representatives of the most important of the country's regionally based ethnic groups. The politically inexperienced junta leaders will presumably rely heavily on civil servants to keep the government functioning and to cope with Sierra Leone's pressing economic problems. 

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Colombia: Leaders of the opposition Liberal Revolutionary Movement (MRL) have used recent guerilla attacks as a pretext for opposing President Lleras' attendance at the inter-American summit meeting next month. They say that the necessary congressional permission to leave Colombia should not be granted Lleras during the current flurry of terrorist activity. The MRL was earlier reported as one of three congressional groups that had agreed not to approve his absence until the question of presidential succession had been settled. 

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